consideration in proportion to what was his while he was alive and amongst his neighbors of his own village. This belief causes them to show great reverence for those of their number who have died. 775

Despite the a'hóts' inclination for wandering about, they yet ever remain in the vicinity of the place where the bodies to which they belonged died.

The soul of a person who dies in a foreign place and who has not been given burial in his home territory, is condemned to wander alone, despised and sad in the midst of the souls of strangers.

I asked my guide why it was that fortune was so cruel with those wretches who, through no fault of their own, died and left their bodies far from their native place; to which he answered: "The mere fact of these bodies having been left abandoned in a far off place by their companions and by the sons of the same tribe, was a sign that while they were alive they had not enjoyed the love and esteem of the others. The foreign a'hóts on seeing the soul of an outsider make an appearance amongst them reason in this way: 'if the person to whom this soul belonged was not honored by his companions or by the sons of his own tribe, nor given burial befitting a brother, then he was neither loved nor esteemed by his own people.' This being so, then they also shun him and leave him alone." I only repeat the rascal's words. 766

This reminds me of the veneration which the peoples of all nations accord to their burial grounds, and, in this matter of the souls of the unburied being condemned to wander, these Indians have the same beliefs as the ancient Romans according to what Virgil so beautifully expresses in the Aenead.

These beliefs are the basis of the ceremonies to cure the sick and to bury the dead.

But before entering upon their description I must call attention to a sort of star cult, especially amongst the women. These heavenly bodies are the moon and the morning star. 821 795

When the moon rises the women leave their huts and, holding hands, form a circle and begin to wheel rapidly, jumping and shouting in honor of the silvery moon.

They do the same thing when the morning star appears on the eastern horizon, and pray to it that the algarrobo pod crop and other wild fruits may be abundant.

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At midnight also they sometimes break their sleep and men [200] and women together form into a circle and jump and shout in order to win the favor of heaven.

During lunar and solar eclipses they gather together to implore the cessation of the inexplicable phenomenon. Here, however, they have dealings with an a'hót whom they summon and fear.

These are the only acts of worship of which I have knowledge, and they show the inclination of these savages toward sabianism or the religion of stars; yet the sun does not play a part amongst the objects of their worship or of their summoning. According to Faustino the interpreter, they only get together to conjure up the sun's reappearance when it has been hidden behind clouds for a long time (an extremely rare occurrence in that region) or if a storm is coming up -- and even then it is not the sun but the a'hót itself which they conjure because they are being deprived of the light and warmth of the beneficial star.

One can therefore perceive that among these Indians also it is the women who start the worship process and who, as was the case amongst the ancient pagan nations, have found in the pale moon the element most suited to their condition and therefore more able and better disposed to protect them. The sun, on the other hand, so dissimilar from the temperament of womankind, seems to await the worship of men, but they are not so prone to be influenced by fears, hopes and prayers as are the women.

I have not seen idols in any of the places to which my curiosity has guided me to search for them, and my guides have always denied their existence. The Indians' outlook however does not seem to be one which would find the acceptance of idols difficult. In addition to that semi-worship of the heavenly bodies which has been alluded to it is probable that every object in nature having particular characteristics, be they terrifying or beneficial or mysterious, calls forth some response from the Indian which may be close to adoration.

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Mr. Braly, an engineer who has traveled in that part of the Chaco in the vicinity of the Salado River, assures me that the Mocoví Indians of those parts will not leave the place where the aerolite is to be found which fell in the last century with a terrible noise and blinding flash of light.

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